



The World's Breadbasket: An Agricultural Tour through Nebraska

Even though Nebraska boasts two major urban metropolitan areas, it remains a true agricultural and rural state. Center-pivot irrigation was invented in Nebraska, and this unique type of irrigation system provides the much-needed moisture to the state's hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland, helping to make Nebraska the Breadbasket to the world. Nebraska's agricultural roots run deep, and on this itinerary, we will cross the state from Omaha to Kimball, visiting many of its agricultural businesses, attractions, and farm-to-table restaurants.

Day 1 Omaha

Our first activity this morning is a **guided city tour of Omaha** where we will visit many of Nebraska's largest city's hot spots and noteworthy locations before heading to **St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church**, Omaha's only Greek Orthodox Byzantine-style church, for a tour and a traditional Greek lunch and lessons in Greek dancing. *Opa!* After lunch, we head to the **Durham Museum** in the former Union Station to explore the history and settlement of Nebraska's largest city. Make sure to head to the platform downstairs for the chance to walk through authentic train cars and other exhibits. Next, we will head to north Omaha for a visit to **Florence Mill**. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the mill began as the gristmill for Mormon Winter Quarters in 1846 built under the supervision of Brigham Young. Today, it and grain elevator are a cultural attraction housing a museum, art gallery, and farmers market.

Our next stop is **Father Flanagan's Boys Town** in west Omaha to learn more about this exceptionally heartwarming story of how Father Flanagan worked to create a haven for wayward boys, and now girls, when he purchased Overlook Farm in 1921. For dinner tonight, we explore Germany and experience the German

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concept of *Gemütlichkeit* (coziness) at the **German American Society**. Delicious comfort food followed by traditional German entertainment is on the menu. *Willkommen in Deutschland! Overnight: Omaha*

Day 2 Nebraska City

This morning we head south to spend the day in Nebraska City, Home of Arbor Day. Our first stop is **Kregel Windmill Factory Museum** where we will step back in time to see a factory from the industrial revolution. This unique museum houses more than one million artifacts and is a time capsule from an important period in the history and expansion of our nation. Next, spend some time at **Arbor Lodge State Historical Park** and wander the rooms of the beautiful estate of J. Sterling Morton, founder of Arbor Day. Built in 1855, this four-room frame house was remodeled over the years to become the magnificent 52-room mansion it is today. The mansion's rooms are filled with authentic furnishings and displays that capture the life and times of this great Nebraska visionary.



Afterward, we tour **Arbor Day Farm**, a 260-acre working farm orchard and forest, which also is a National Historic Landmark, with an experienced nature interpreter. We can visit the 50-foot-high Tree Adventure treehouse for an amazing view of the farm and take home a tree seedling from the Lied Greenhouse. Next, we head to the **Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Interpretive Trail & Visitor Center** overlooking the Missouri River to learn more about the 300 plus flora, fauna, and scientific discoveries Lewis and Clark made on their historic Corps of Discovery Journey. Our final stop in Nebraska City is

Kimmel Orchard & Vineyard. This working orchard and vineyard is the best destination for fresh, locally grown produce and other homegrown Nebraska products. *Overnight: Omaha*

Day 3 Lincoln

After breakfast, we head to Lincoln, Nebraska's capital city, where our first stop is the **International Quilt Study Center** where we will discover the many stories and religious contexts woven into quilts at the world's largest publicly held quilt collection. The behind-the-scenes tour takes visitors face to face with quilts that are hundreds of years old. Afterward, we make our way to **Larsen Tractor Test Museum** on the University of Nebraska East Campus to visit the only tractor testing museum and tractor test laboratory in the world. On display are more than 25 tractors highlighting the advancements in tractor testing technology, which established power and performance standards and solved agricultural problems around the world. While on campus, we will make a short stop at the **UNL Dairy Store** for a tour of the cheese making facility and a tasty ice cream treat.

After lunch, our final stop in Lincoln is one that no tour to the city is complete without. At 15 stories and 400-feet-tall, the iconic **Nebraska State Capitol** is the second-tallest statehouse in the country and offers a

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spectacular view of the city from its 14th floor observation level. Our nature tour of Lincoln includes some interesting stops. First, the **Valhalla Bee Farm** supplies the bees that live on the Cornhusker Hotel's roof. Spend time with the beekeepers to find out how they started this business and the benefits to a sustainable bee population. Afterward, we can take a walking tour of the **Pollinator Flyway** in downtown Lincoln before heading to **Sleepy Bee Lavender Farm** for a tour of their lavender fields. Dinner that evening will be at the new **Greenhouse Innovation Center**. *Overnight: Lincoln*

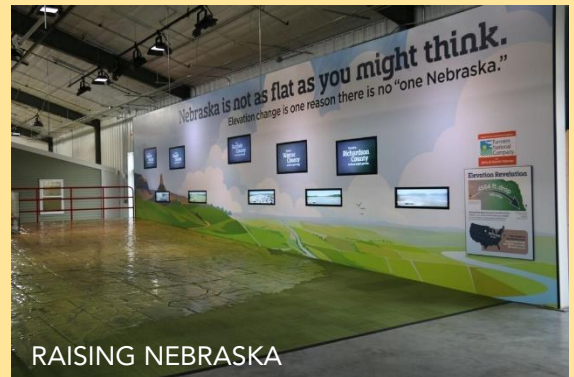
Day 4

York, Grand Island, Hastings



This morning we head west to York and **Wessels Living History Farm** to learn first-hand how farm life and agriculture have changed from the 1920s to modern day farming techniques and technologies at this interactive and educational working farm. **Mennonite Heritage Park** in nearby Henderson is the ideal destination to hear costumed storytellers recount stories about the Henderson Mennonites and explain how this group is connected to the Amish and Old-Mennonites in Pennsylvania, and why these Germans from Russia immigrated to Nebraska.

Upon arrival in Grand Island, our first stop is at **Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer** for lunch and a chance to step back into the past. Declared one of the top ten living history museums in the country, this amazing museum transports us back to the early pioneer and settlement days of Nebraska. Next, we venture to downtown Grand Island to meet the owners of **Zabuni Coffee** to hear their unique and inspiring story of how they are supporting local coffee growers and producers in Kenya to bring their product to Nebraska. Once we finish downtown, it is time to head to **Raising Nebraska** at Fonner Park. This 25,000-square-foot interactive museum connects consumers with farmers who raise their food by explaining the steps from "farm to fork." Experience a virtual combine harvest experience, full-sized pivot irrigation system, a 50-foot-long interactive floor map of Nebraska, and an interactive dinner table. We continue our agricultural tour in central Nebraska at **Prairie Loft Center for Outdoor and Agricultural Learning** near Hastings. This unique interactive agricultural center gives a deeper understanding of agriculture and how it connects people to the land and our food. *Overnight: Kearney*



Day 5

Kearney, North Platte

We start the day with a visit to **The Archway**, an impressive interactive museum that commemorates the nation's westward expansion through interactive exhibits and self-guided audio tours. On a side note, at a height of 310 feet, this is the only tourist attraction in the country to span a federal interstate highway. Now it

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is off to North Platte and a tour of the **Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center** for a bird's eye view of the world's largest railroad classification yard from the 7th floor open air observation deck or the 8th floor enclosed deck.

Afterward, we climb aboard Union Pacific's steam locomotive at **Cody Park Railroad Museum** where we also can see UP's #6922, the largest diesel locomotive ever made, peek inside the historic Hershey Depot, and climb aboard a mail car and caboose to view historic railroad memorabilia. North Platte's "**Here's the Beef**" tour at the West Central Research & Extension Office has educators and a chef from a local restaurant available to explain the steps needed to raise and process beef from pasture to the table. Afterward, we can feast on a delicious Nebraska beef dinner prepared on site. *Overnight: North Platte*

Day 6 North Platte

Start the day off right with a special treat of an ice cream donut sandwich, waffle sundae, or other tasty concoction at **Double Dips Ice Creamery**, located in North Platte's historic Canteen District before heading to After lunch, we spend time with **Miller Farms**, a third generation working farm that produces corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay where we will experience a little bit of farm life from aboard a tractor-pulled wagon through the corn and hay fields to learn more about farming in Nebraska.

Afterward, it is time to get wet at **Dusty Trails** for a truly Nebraskan activity, leisurely floating down the North Platte River in a horse watering tank. Chairs and coolers can be placed in the tanks for an even more enjoyable time. Now we head to **Buffalo Bill State Historical Park** to "**Ride with the Wild Bunch.**" We will meet Colonel William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and his wife to hear about their lives and their interesting adventures. Afterward, hop aboard a horse drawn wagon to nearby **Lincoln County Historical Museum** and a deliciously prepared Dutch oven dinner. A tour of the museum, including an authentic recreated Old West town and artifacts highlighting the story of the famous World War II North Platte Canteen round out your day. We will end our day in North Platte with "**Wine with the Stars**" sipping local wines at **Feather River Vineyard** under the wide-open Nebraska skies. A local astronomer will be onsite with telescopes to highlight the celestial bodies you are viewing in the night sky. *Overnight: North Platte*

Day 7 North Platte, Ogallala, Sidney

After breakfast, we take a leisurely stroll through salvaged and repurposed historic grain bins to forage out that perfect antique treasure at **Grain Bin Antique Town** before heading to **Fort Cody Trading Post**, one of Nebraska's most eclectic gift and souvenir shops. Do not miss the working 20,000-piece miniature replica of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and tour Old West exhibits in the newly renovated museum. Then we head further west to Ogallala, once known as the "town too tough for Texans" where our first stop is at **Front Street and Cowboy Museum**, a recreation of an 1880s Old West main street where we will enjoy an authentic western style lunch at the **Crystal Palace Saloon**. From June to mid-August, do not miss the **Crystal Palace Revue**, a rootin' tootin' western shootout, complete with cowboys and showgirls.

Across the street is the **Petrified Wood and Art Gallery** where we explore Native American artifacts and delicate works of art and carvings formed from pieces of ancient, petrified wood from around the world. Sidney is our next stop where we visit **Camp Lookout**, the oldest building in town. Initially built as housing for soldiers in 1867 to protect railroad workers on the Union Pacific railroad from attacks by the Sioux and Cheyenne, today re-enactors entertain you with stories of the building and its many colorful inhabitants over the years. We continue our Old West experience here by trying our hand at grave dousing at **Sidney's Boot Hill Cemetery**.
Overnight: Sidney

Day 8 Potter, Kimball, Gering

This morning, we continue west along the Lincoln Highway Scenic Byway to the village of Potter to experience small town Nebraska charm. Wander through the downtown district enjoying a famous Tin Roof Sundae at **Potter Sundry** before stepping back into the 1920s to try your hand at **Duck Pin Bowling** in this restored three-lane alley for a one-of-a-kind bowling experience. Afterward head to **Chuckaboo Station** for a cup of coffee or **Potter Sundry** for one of its famous Tin Roof Sundaes (vanilla ice cream, chocolate syrup, chocolate ice cream, marshmallow cream, and nuts).

We continue west to Kimball near the Nebraska-Colorado-Wyoming state lines for an informative tour of **EJE Ranch** to learn about the High Plain's short grass prairie on a working ranch and the opportunity to venture out into the prairie to see this fragile ecosystem firsthand. After lunch, we head north of Kimball along the Fossil Freeway to **Rocky Hollow Buffalo Company**. This working ranch raises grass fed bison and you will have the unique opportunity to view these majestic animals up-close and learn how they have thrived for thousands of years in western Nebraska's High Plains region.

Once in Gering, our first stop is **Scotts Bluff National Monument**, an imposing natural formation which was a prominent landmark for American Indians, fur traders, and Oregon and Mormon trail pioneers. At 800 feet above the North Platte River, a drive to the summit offers a tremendous view of the entire valley and the wagon ruts still visible at the base. Afterward, we follow the footsteps of early pioneers at **Robidoux 1851 Trading Post** along the historic Oregon Trail where pioneer graves and eroded trail ruts complete the history.

We round out the time in Gering with a wagon train dinner at **Legacy of the Plains**. While there we learn about the lives and stories of the people who explored and settled the High Plains of Nebraska. Exhibits focus on the archeology of Native American and Westward expansions, the lives of pioneering settlers, the establishment of irrigation, the diversity of cultures on the High Plains, and the innovative technologies and cultural practices of raising animals and crops in a semi-arid environment. *Overnight: Gering*

